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Z*NET INTERNATIONAL ATARI ONLINE MAGAZINE

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CONTENTS

THE EDITORS DESK.....Ron Kovacs
Z*NET NEWSWIRE.....
GLENDALE ATARIFEST SHOW REPORT.....John Nagy
CODEHEAD SOFTWARE UPDATE.....Press Release
WAACE ATARIFEST 1991.....Announcement
GRIBNIF SOFTWARE UPDATE.....Press Release
Z*NET SOFTWARE SHELF.....Ron Berinstein

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THE EDITORS DESK

by Ron Kovacs

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This week's edition contains an expanded review of last weeks Glendale Atarifest. John Nagy is presenting part one of the event and will offer MORE information next week. Please note that there is a lot of information gathered at this event and some of the regular columns are being placed on hold until we complete this coverage.

Z*MAG UPDATE

Issue's #196 and 197 were released this month and Issue #198 will be released on Monday. Z*Magazine will publish it's last issue with #200 sometime before the end of this year.

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Z*NET NEWSWIRE

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[NOTE: Much of the news this week is from the Glendale Atari Show, held last weekend in Southern California. Details of these news stories can be found in the complete show report this week, as well as in the

supplemental reports next week in Z*Net.]

GLENDALE SHOW HAS 3,500, NEW PRODUCTS PREMIER

The Southern California Atari Computer Faire version 5.0 brought 3,297 visitors through the front doors and more through the back to make it the biggest Atari event in America in the last several years. Over 50 vendors and developers participated in one way or another, breaking all prior US records for variety and support. Lots of new products were premiered Saturday and Sunday, September 14 and 15, and sales were "phenomenal". A comprehensive report by John Nagy follows the Newswire.

GE SERVICE TO HANDLE EXPANDED ATARI WARRANTY WORLDWIDE

Atari is engaged in negotiations to make General Electric Service Centers the worldwide walk-in and depot repair centers for Atari computers. Preparation included a redesign of the TT motherboard to meet GE's specs. The deal should become effective in January '92, and Atari's warranty period will be expanded from the current 90 days to 6 months or a year. Details are still being finalized.

FSM GDOS SHIPS!

The waiting is over for Atari's Font Scaling Manager, FSM GDOS. The first commercial copies were sold last weekend at the Glendale Atari show, as part of WordFlair II. A license fee of \$35 was charged at the show for the new system, which was designed by QMS-Imagen for use with their Ultrascript fonts and systems. Stand-alone commercial copies will be available within weeks, as only the packing box itself is not ready for shipping.

TT030 PASSES FCC TYPE B IN TWO VERSIONS

The Atari TT030 computer has at last passed the FCC certification process as a Type B consumer device, allowing unfettered sale and distribution to approved dealers. New FCC guru at Atari's Dallas research center is IBM and TI alumni Robert Joplin, who not only designed the new TT motherboard to pass the FCC, but then proceeded to alter the existing TT design to be able to pass as well.

TT SHIPPING WITH 1.44 MEG FLOPPY NOW, MEGA NEXT

The first boatload of new equipment from the plants in Taiwan is now in Sunnyvale, and the papers have arrived announcing another load coming. There should be ample stock for the upcoming months, and the new TT computers arriving now include a 1.44 megabyte floppy disk rather than the 720K unit shipped to date. Upgrades will be available "soon" for existing TT and Mega STe owners at "under \$100" according to Atari's Bill Rehbock.

ANOTHER NEW TOS AIDS UPGRADES

Atari has revised TOS again, this time to facilitate upgraded systems. The older versions do not check to see what kind of machine they are in, and so older (non-"E") computers have a hard time being adapted. The new code enables TOS upgrades for almost any Atari, although a new small circuit board is required to add the new 2.05 to older ST's. TOS 2.05 and a similarly updated version for the TT (3.x) should become available as standard replacement parts within 90 days. No other operational

difference is integrated in this TOS change, so there is no reason to upgrade a Mega STe or TT with the new TOS.

ST BOOK NOW TYPE B, TO SEE IMMEDIATE PRODUCTION

According to Bill Rehbock in his address to Glendale show visitors, the Atari ST BOOK and STylus Pad computers have been tested and already pass FCC Type B standards, and only the paperwork remains in the registration process. The ST Book will see production of about 1,000 units a month until after Christmas, when the hard-to-get Epson-made LCD screens will go off of the rationing program. The 1-meg, 40 megabyte HD version will retail at about \$1800, while the 4-meg 80 mbHD will be about \$500 more. Memory will not be upgradable.

STYLUS TO GET JUMP ON PAD MARKET

In final production tooling now, the \$1200 Atari STylus (pad-like keyboardless computer) should be a leader at COMDEX in October due to the thousands of ST applications that are immediately compatible with it. The handwriting recognition system makes any normal ST program able to operate from the pen environment, while other brands of Pad computers are waiting for custom made applications before they will be useful.

CDAR505 CD ROM ARRIVING

"On the water" as you read this, the CDAR 505 CD ROM player from Atari will be available for sale by COMDEX in mid October. The first batch of production units were too late to be shown at Glendale last week, but will be in hand by the end of September. Atari's Softsource CD will be pressed in the next 45 days, and should retail at about \$29. A number of other companies are ready to produce CD titles for the ST as soon as the players are available. Look for details of the Z*NET CD featuring hundreds of MEGS of files, coming soon.

DIGITAL MASTER FROM HYBRID ARTS

Introduced at the Glendale show was Hybrid Arts new "Digital Master" direct-to-disk sound manipulation system. This device, at under \$4,000, should make advanced digital audio editing a reality at thousands of TV and Radio stations as well as at the smallest of commercial recording studios. Best of all, it uses Atari - and ONLY Atari - computers as the control unit. More details are in the Glendale Show Report, also in this issue of Z*Net.

SOFT-LOGIK GIVING USER GROUPS PAGESTREAM

Atari user groups can get two copies of the desktop publisher PageStream 2.1, plus another demo copy for their library. The groups are urged to raffle one copy off, use the other for production of their newsletter, and offer the demo version for any member who wants to see more. A related program will offer discounts for user group members when they buy PageStream from dealers. The groups should send written requests to Soft-Logik, 11131 S. Towne Square, St. Louis, MO 63123.

ATARI QUILTS WAREHOUSE, CLEANOUT AUCTION

One of Atari's two Sunnyvale warehouses has been emptied and abandoned in a move that will save many thousands of dollars. On Friday morning, September 13, an auction was held at the old warehouse site to clean out the last of the various stock that Atari would not be retaining in

storage. The variety was dazzling and in some cases, frightening to the buyers. Prototype 8-bit and ST hardware was in the batch, but much of it was withdrawn from sale. There were memory expansion modules for the 800's, something that looked like an ST disk drive but designed for cartridges of some kind, and more. Literally TONS of full pallets of 8-bit and 2600 game carts were earmarked for removal or shipping to Mexico where the 8-bit is still sold in volume. Buyers were shocked to find pallets of TT parts including power supplies, cases, and unpopulated motherboards in the trash and for sale, giving rise to an instant rumor that the TT was being discontinued. A more likely reason was revealed at Glendale's show that weekend when Bill Rehbock explained that a completely new TT board layout is now in production. The old parts are apparently not usable in the new design.

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GLENDALE SHOW REPORT

by John Nagy

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[This has been the hardest show review I have ever had to write... at least the hardest to get started. There's so much to report, and all of it is good news. Where to start? I have to admit that a significant amount of my time since the show has been consumed by... er, RESEARCH, yeah, that's the ticket, research work on the new Lynx machine that I got at the show. I find that the fastest way to make it to 1:00 A.M. is to pick up the Lynx at 10:00 P.M.. Headphones cause a distinct enhancement of the time dilation effect. Fortunately, I am not a "game" person, so I'm able to preserve my objectivity and keep the proper distance from the addictive nature of the Lynx. The proper distance seems to be about 15 inches. I'll share more details with you as my intensive research continues...]

It was the best turnout to any user-group show in years. More than 3,500 people came to the Glendale Civic Center Saturday and Sunday, September 14 and 15, for the Southern California Atari Computer Faire, Version 5.0. Official gate/ticket sales were 3,297, plus the usual number of people involved in the booths, helpers, vendors, Atari personnel, guests, and late walk-ins.

As usual, the weather was perfect for Los Angeles - near 80 and hazy (that's what we call it when the air is bad enough to be visible). Over 1,000 people were roaming the wide isles at Glendale within the first hour of opening, and the line outside for tickets never dissipated until early afternoon. At times it was more than a block long! The most desirable complaint imaginable for show promoters was often heard on Saturday: "It's too crowded here." Saturday totals were 2,100. Sunday yielded another 1,200.

A total of 51 individual developers and dealers were represented, more than any Atari show on record to date. Sales were almost frighteningly good. Some developers were unprepared for the volume of sales and ran out of products by mid-day Saturday. Fortunately, most of them were able to generate or locate more stock. Others simply took orders to ship later. A show promoter's second most desirable complaint: "Sales are too good - we didn't bring enough product."

Over the six year history of the Los Angeles area show, attendance has been: 1986 - 3,000; 1987 - 5,000; 1988 - 3,500; 1989 - canceled; 1990 - 2,500; 1991 - 3,500. Increased attendance this year despite an indisputably shrinking userbase is attributed to organizer John King Tarpinian's success in effective publicity and advertising placement, plus a very open and flexible attitude. Everyone involved in the show from H.A.C.K.S. and other participating clubs that provided the volunteer work on up through the vendors, developers, and Atari itself were cooperative and unselfish in their efforts to make this the best show it could be. Virtually no rules, regulations, or up-charge items. Profit was never a motive, and the volunteers didn't have their hands out for goodies. User group tables were free. It worked just fine.

Bob Brodie, Atari's Communications and User Group man, was a key to the success as well, although he was unable to participate in the show itself. Bob personally arranged Atari's involvement, including the equipment to be used by all of the vendors and developers, and the Atari display itself. Not as much show stock is available as used to be, and with the larger number of vendors at the Glendale show, hard decisions had to be made as to where the equipment would do the most good. The vendor floor was favored over the Atari area on the main stage, resulting in a sparse display under the Atari banner.

Sadly, more than one individual was heard to say, "Look how Atari is supporting this show! It's disgraceful to see almost nothing on that stage. And Bob Brodie didn't even bother to come!" I informed them whenever possible that the many dozens of STe and TT machines littering the main floor were ALSO from Atari and were placed where they were really needed, and that Bob had come on Friday but had to leave Saturday morning to attend to urgent family health matters. Profuse apologies always followed from the complainers once they understood the situation. It's a shame that some users have been conditioned by the more reactionary media to assume the worst, then to treat their assumptions as fact.

SEMINARS

Because of uncertainty of attendance, the seminar schedule was small by comparison to last year's Glendale show, but more time was allotted to each. Atari Corp had the first seminar on Saturday, with Bill Rehbock (Atari's Technical Developer support man) and James Grunke (Atari's Music division head) standing in for Bob Brodie. Mike Fulton, part of Atari's Technical department, was in the audience of nearly 200 to lend some additional information. Bill carried most of the talk and did just fine. He gave a well received and remarkably technical and detailed talk. Many in the audience were pleased to get a real nuts and bolts view and discussion about the Atari hardware, both existing and to come. In fact, Bill told far more than any of us thought we would hear, revealing a reasoned and purposeful course of action ahead for Atari. He also showed the exciting new ST BOOK notebook size computer, which had the audience ooing and aahing. I joked with Bill after the seminar that he had spilled enough inside secrets to get him fired several times. Z*Net will carry a full story about the content of Bill's talk next week, but highlights of it will pepper the Z*NET NEWSWIRE this week and for several more to come.

Next up was the inimitable Dave Small, packing in a standing room only crowd. They were treated to Dave's remarkable wit and philosophy as well as details and history of his equally remarkable Macintosh

emulation systems and new SST 68030 upgrade board. Dave spoke to and with the audience for over an hour and a half, concluding with his classic "how I coded the Magic Sac Keyboard/mouse handler" story, complete with extended vocal emulation of "pain made audible", namely Neil Young recordings. For those who have missed the pleasure of hearing the story, Dave relates how he tackled the monumental and frightening task of writing the code to make the Atari keyboard look like Mac input. He was assisted (?!?) by the most miserable and depressing sound he could find, Neil Young LIVE, played over and over until the job was done.

Despite having a hard act to follow, Nathan Potechin finished the day of seminars with a long and thorough look at CALAMUS SL, doing page composition live on an overhead projector. Towards the end of the presentation, the audience was smaller but very involved in discussing the features, procedures, and power of Calamus. Nathan was pleased to see the level of sophistication in the users, and discovered some new things about Calamus SL himself through their questions and suggestions. A full-color overhead screen unit was available, but it would not operate with the TT on hand, so the new color capacities of SL were not able to be demonstrated in the seminar. Instead, Nathan used his MEGA ST with Jim Allen's 68030 upgrade board in it, making Calamus SL run at speeds faster than a TT. Fortunately, Calamus SL was shown in color on the main floor of the show, and it looked particularly dazzling on the MATRIX COLOR VIDEO CARD equipped TT on the Atari stage.

THE SHOW FLOOR:

ATARI

Atari's display was small, as mentioned earlier. But it featured the full line of ST and TT products, as well as a number of Portfolio computers. The ST BOOK was periodically available for the general public to admire and try for themselves. I found the unit to be absolutely irresistible. The display is monochrome only, and has no backlight. But the view is clear and clean in any light that's enough to type by. The keyboard is a bit smaller than standard, but not enough to let my fingers know it. The keys are sort of like very hard rubber -- the no-slip effect makes typing very easy and errors less frequent. The key motion is small but the feel is very satisfying. On the other hand, the "vector mousepad" that most users rave about was less than pleasing to me. Although it can certainly be gotten used to, the motionless pad is disorienting. Press gently at any edge of the mouse disk, and the pointer moves proportionally to your pressure and position. I found that the fact that the mouse pointer disappears when in motion (common on any LCD screen due to the pixel response time) combined with no tactile feedback from physical motion at the mousepad makes for very unpredictable pointer placement -- at least at first. I seem to be in the minority in my dissatisfaction. But I am part of the unanimous majority that wants one of these computers as soon as possible. They will be coming into the USA at a trickle (a few hundred a month of the 1,000 a month total production allotment) until the screens become more available from the supplier in very early '92.

In front of the stage, the LYNX PLAYGROUND was usually fully utilized, with 10 Lynx units (new and old models) running the latest releases for the miniature color game system. [I, of course, was only doing RESEARCH there...]

RETAILERS

Two Southern California retailers dominated the center isle with massive displays of Atari merchandise of every description at remarkable prices. Both are ATARI AEGIS approved dealers. Not a whole lot of Atari brand hardware was available, however, due to consignment arrangements that were not completed in time for the show. But the Computer Network (of Glendale) and Mid Cities CompSoft (of Bellflower) each brought what appeared to be their entire store with them to the show. In fact, both stores had arranged with other stores (that were unable to come to the show) to sell their stock on consignment as well, making for a more varied offering of hardware and software, domestic and imported. The Computer Network built custom walls and hung row upon row of racked software in their huge walk-through sales floor. A complete MIDI studio graced the end of Computer Network's area, as well as two full DTP workstations. This would be the home base of Nathan Potechin of ISD, showing the latest in Calamus and DynaCADD, as well as a functioning FAST TECHNOLOGY TURBO 030 board running at 40 mHz in a Mega ST. (More on that in a separate article!) Goldleaf representatives rotated their showing of Wordflair II and the range of 3K products between the Mid-Cities and Computer Network areas.

The next largest booth was held by Goodman's Music. Joe Goodman owns a chain of music stores that specialize in synthesizers and computers, and his stores are in fact the USA's leading volume retail outlets of Atari computers. He had a great special going on a Roland MIDI controller (we call them keyboards) in a hardware bundle, and it sold out on Saturday. Also in the Goodman's area were factory representatives of ROLAND and HYBRID ARTS. Hybrid premiered "Digital Master", a mid-market entry in the growing direct-to-hard-disk recording and sound manipulation market. Hybrid's ADAP series is the high-end standard in hardware, used in major motion pictures and television commercials for unparalleled sound re-recording and special effects. "Born on the Forth of July", "Honey I've Shrunk the Kids", and many more movies have been done on ADAP using Atari computers for controllers. Now, Hybrid's Digital Master will make similar audio power available to small studios, TV and radio production facilities, and even to high-end home studios. And like ADAP, it uses the Atari computer as its front end. At under \$4,000, it's not a consumer device, but it's priced right for low-end pro use.

Roland was showing a variety of their sound modules, including the CM-32L in a bundle with TENTRAX. Together, they offer a new level of ease of use and variety of sounds for beginner or advanced user. Tentrax looks like a ten channel studio mix board on the screen, and operates the same way, complete with VU meters on each channel. Roland's representative Jan Paulshus was enthused by the turnout of MIDI literate users, as well as by the substantial sales he made during the Glendale event. He pledged Roland's and Steinberg's continued development on the Atari platform, the computer he believes is the only one that is serious about offering a wide and competent MIDI presence.

Recognized musicians and studio people were present all during the show: members of Earth, Wind, and Fire; jazz musician and producer Ronnie Foster; the keyboardist for Phil Collins and Genesis; studio and session people from Bon Jovi, Scorpions, and others; producers of TV shows, commercials, and movies; more. Keep in mind that this is "Hollywood", and Atari is what many of the people who shape the sounds of our times are using. It's only natural that they would come out for a major Atari show like Glendale. Formerly the audio technician for the Beach Boys supergroup, Atari's James Grunke made them feel at ease and in professional hands. Familiar faces from TV and movies were seen all

weekend, too.

James Grunke made it plain that Atari is remaining aggressively in the MIDI field, and numbers of major players in the industry are convinced that Atari is the best way to play. Many professionals who use Mac MIDI hardware and software admit to having had it given to them, but when they choose hardware and software for themselves, it's Atari, thank you. James also pointed out that calling everything MIDI software is really not right; it's MUSIC software. MIDI is just a port. We don't call Calamus or Word Perfect "Parallel Port Software", after all.

DISTRIBUTORS

For the sake of organization, I'm grouping those who are primarily wholesalers and distributors of products separately from distributors who also generate significant original software (I'll call them "developers".) No qualitative inference is to be taken by my classification! I just hope I don't miss any!

Best: Brad Koda had his usual array of incredible Atari collectibles, parts, thingies, dowhatsis, and more parts. Need to repair an 810 disk drive (remember them?)? See Brad. New parts for new computers too. Cheap and amazing. Atari's module to expand a 600XL to 64K for \$24. Browsing the Best table is worthwhile even if only for the smiles that the memories bring back. He had the 1200 baud SX212 modem for \$25.

Michtron: A different Michtron with a different flavor. The irascible Gordon Monnier is gone and Michtron is no longer in Michigan. New owner James Dorsman offered great deals on Michtron titles old and new, and the Stereo Replay was a hot item. Interesting and cheap was a 3-D spreadsheet system. ProText, HiSoft Basic (\$14.95!!), and other titles were cheap enough to make you buy it without a second thought.

PDC: "Public Domain Corporation" offers commercial products like any one else. Their main display was STEALTH, a full featured terminal program by Hagop Yanoyan that grew from HagTerm. They also offer memory upgrade kits, TCB Tracker sound digitizers, and more, but did not push them by comparison to STealth.

Rimik: Richard Betson left Talon and started his own import and development/distribution company. The main offering was MULTIGEM, and the demos were intriguing. It takes a bit of getting used to seeing real activity in several windows at once. Multitasking that really works. Other Rimik products are DTPaint and Menu Plus.

Rio Computers: These folks had a crowd most of the time. Distributors of the Lexicor graphics products, Rio had Lee Seiler at their booth most of the time showing off his Lexicor creations done with Phase 4 products. Some of his art looks more like photographs than actual photographs do. Other Rio interests included GENLOCK, the remarkable \$850 wringer-washer looking full page scanner, Superchargers and expansion boxes for them, and a \$499 super VGA card for use with the Supercharger MS-DOS emulator.

Talon: Superchargers, PC Speed and AT Speed, and lots and lots and lots of those colorful Beetle Mice. The Mice look like fingers with Hollywood Secretary Nails on them to me... but for \$29 each, they were irresistible to many buyers. A display of a well known IBM race car program running in emulation at full speed attracted a lot of attention.

Zubair: Abu brought Z-Keys (PC keyboard adaptor), lots of easy memory upgrades, ST/ime clocks (now for STe machines too) at show special savings. He also advertised yet another new scanner, interface, and powerful editing software. Unlike most other companies, Zubair will sell the interface and software without a scanner, allowing you to use any brand of your choice that uses the now standard mini-round plug.

DEVELOPERS

ADG: Andrew Gordon is a musician who has brought his art together with the computer to make a training and learning system. His book, disk, and tape packs of "Outstanding Blues and Jazz Compositions" allow a unique practice and appreciation experience.

AtariUser Magazine: Although they had no booth, AtariUser was everywhere at Glendale. The October issue was rushed directly from the printer to the hall on Saturday morning, and everyone was handed an issue at the door with their ticket package. Attendees loved it, although the floor was a bit unsafe while users walked and read at the same time. The editors staff circulated all day on both days of the show, and sales manager Kevin Horn offered his colorful AtariUser T-shirts and polo shirts for sale. They looked even better in person than in the magazine ads.

Branch Always Software: Darek Mihocka sold out of his QUICK ST 3 several times... He was able to make new product on site, but something went wrong on the master disk for his upgrades for QST 2 on Saturday. Most buyers of the upgrade will have to get another disk, as the one that was duplicated shows a virus and irretrievable files. The "virus" is not really a virus although it will register as one. It's just a badly botched boot sector. Darek says he sold three or four times as much product as he was prepared for. Another intriguing item at the BRASOFT booth: Darek's 8-bit emulator made a comeback in a TT version, running at full 8-bit speed in all graphics modes. Why? Why not? He also has had a full-speed 8-bit emulator that runs on IBM computers for over a year, but Atari won't let him release the Atari operating system (required) for use on non-Atari computers.

D.A. Brumleve: Dorothy Brumleve brought her smiling face and cigarettes to Glendale to show her unparalleled line of programs for children. At her low-key booth, Dot managed to sell a lot of product to parents who realize the value of having computer-ready children. Her KIDPRGs programs are usable by kids as young as 2 or 3 years old! Titles included Telegram, Kidpublisher Professional, Super Kidgrid, and Kidpainter.

Clear Thinking: Ed Hack is not the author... it's the product. Craig Harvey of Michigan came to show and sell his Edhack text/program/sector desk accessory editor, now in version 2.2. It will work on any size file, even larger than RAM. A lot for \$18.95.

CodeHead Software: John Eidsvoog and Charles F. Johnson had a busy weekend, again doing the fastest demos known to man. They premiered Multi Desk Deluxe and sold out in the first three hours. The new version of the desk-accessory expander allows virtually an unlimited list of available DA's, and doesn't take up RAM until you call the one you want to use. Maxi File III also did a disappearing act at special show prices. But the excitement at CodeHead was mostly over a pair of new imported drawing products, Avant Vector and Repro Studio. These titles sell for lots more overseas than the CodeHeads will charge here,

but they are still pricey by US standards. At \$495 (\$449 introductory price), Avant Vector does automatic vector conversion of even the most complex scanned (bit) images and even supports popular scanners. The result is full scalable and manipulable vector graphics. The system goes further to provide absolutely unmatched vector drawing tools. An even more expensive version supports plotter and PostScript output. Repro Studio is a matching bit-image application. CodeHead will ship the product in the coming week or so.

Phil Comeau Software: From Ontario, Canada, Phil brought his GramSlam grammar and style checker as well as a new product, Grammar Expert. Expert offers online help for improving the use of written English.

Compo: All the way from Europe for the Glendale show, Neil O'Nions patiently and quietly demonstrated what may be the most powerful word processor yet. The \$179 That's Write (and the \$89 cut down version called Write On) leads the market in Germany, and Compo is tackling the UK, French, and US markets now. Almost like a DTP system, That's Write has paragraph style tagging that changes all your preconceived notions about page formatting. And more: it allows mixing of resident printer fonts and GDOS bit fonts even in the same word! Although it doesn't use GDOS itself, GDOS fonts can be loaded and unloaded on the fly. Best of all, That's Write is a growing product, with significant upgrades planned for the coming year. It's nice to see a major application that will have continuing development. Compo is also worldwide distributors of PC-Speed and AT-Speed IBM emulators.

Double Click: Mike Vederman drew a crowd with demos and pre-sales of DC DATA DIET, a real-time and transparent system that can nearly double the storage capacity of your hard drive without slowing things down perceptibly. It boasts a 100K/sec throughput. Essentially, files are compressed and expanded upon saving and retrieving, without user intervention. It looks bulletproof and may sell "jillions" of copies. Their other products, DC DESKTOP, DC Utilities, DC Shower, etc, all were available at show prices. Mike also showed a product to be ready later in the year, the Game Workbench. Similar in concept to STOS but more involved, the Game Workbench will be both a tool to make high quality games and a multi-media editor and presentation application. And very easy to use. Cheap too, probably well under \$100. With this, anyone will be able to make animated interactive presentations or custom games. I didn't see DC NoveTalk, their new Novell Network software designed for use on ST's while in PC emulation mode.

Gadgets by Small: Who would have believed that the focus of attention at Dave Small's would not be on a Mac emulator? The GCR's on display were almost a paperweight by comparison to the interest in the SST 68030 speedup board for the ST computers. Yep, what you've heard is true, the SST makes your ST FASTER than a TT. By quite a bit. You pay for what you get, though-\$800 up to near \$1,500. But cheaper than a TT, certainly. And the speed wars are on between the Gadgets gadget and FAST's technology. More on this in a separate article. Short version: Yikes! They are both mighty fast!

Gribnif: The NeoDesk folks are now lots more. Rick Flashman and Trish Metcalf have expanded the Gribnif umbrella over Strata Software's STalker and STeno (both in new and more powerful versions) as well as GTSoft's Cardfile (also upgraded in the process). Glendale was the premier of the new STalker 3 terminal-in-a-desk-accessory. It's now simply "awesome". Can you believe it will do all its things in background mode? Yup. Run scripts? Yup. Even emulate ALADDIN? Yup.

Run a mini BBS? Yup. Multiple simultaneous sessions online? Yup. A special show price? Yup. A sellout? Yup. Also drawing attention was Arabesque, an integrated vector and bitmap drawing and painting application. Although not ready for sale (documentation still to go), Arabesque will be under \$200 by the end of November. A companion program, Convector, will follow later, adding outline-tracing of bitmap images or scans.

ICD: The Chicago based ICD was represented by Jeff Williams and Doug Wheeler, and showed their line of hard drives, tape backups, and even 8-bit products. Their AdSpeed 16 mHz 68000 accelerator board was there, plus something new: AdSpeed STe. About \$50 more expensive than the \$299 AdSpeed, the STe unit is a no-solder jewel that also features a math co-processor socket for DynaCADD and other software that can benefit by it. They were taking 8-bit orders for products as well, and will consider new production runs if demand is there. Negotiations with other companies are engaged that may result in someone else taking over the entire ICD 8-bit line.

JMG: The Hyperlink folks from Canada had ever-improving demonstrations of their layered-look windowed interactive display/database/application generator. As more users create their own applications, they have shared them with JMG. So there's a growing library of uses and idea starters. Regularly \$149, it was \$125 at the show.

McDonald and Associates: Rod McDonald puts out the widely read ST INFORMER monthly. He also manages Application and Design Software, makers of the Universal Item Selector (an absolute must-have utility). UIS 3 has improved again, and Rod and company were doing upgrades at the show. Of course, I forgot to bring my registered copy both days. A&D also now has the Universal Network, a software network manager that will interface any and all of the existing networking hardware. Rod says he has sold his network to school systems and newspapers around the world, with the largest setup connecting over 100 ST computers. He also showed Tax Wizard and G-Print.

Micro Creations: The G.I.M.E. Terminal is more than just the pictures-by-modem system we have seen at shows for over two years now. It uses a full GEM iconed screen for full featured terminal functions, and has a C-like script language that makes it programmable into a BBS or whatever. It still sends nifty pictures. Micro Creations also showed a video poker card game that looked well polished.

Musicode: Polished cards hit their peak at the Musicode exhibit, where Blackjack Plus 3 drew the gambling crowd. Very, very complete and realistic, BJP3 will let you program in your play strategy in order to test it before you unleash yourself on Vegas. Their MIDI software almost was an afterthought by comparison.

Omnimon Peripherals Inc. (OPI): We used to call Paul Wu's company Wuztek, but they have grown. Their large booth featured the all-knowing Norm Weinress, designer of OPI's DEKA keyboard interface for PC keyboards, and Norm previewed his Omnichrome board. This one looks like a hit: it is for regular ST computers, plugs in, and gives a 16 million color palette and 256 colors in 640 x 200 resolution on existing ST monitors, and up to 800 x 600 resolution in 256 colors on multisynch monitors! It will start at \$399 and go up for more features. OPI still offers the Rainbow series of ST-ready multisynch monitors, and they were \$100 off for the show.

Oregon Research Associates: Bob Luneski's Diamond Back II version 2.03 was another early sellout. The premier hard drive backup system, DBII offered a new version starting at the Glendale show. Bob says he has radically improved the "backup with compression" option, so much so that it takes HALF the time a regular backup takes. He has formulated a compression scheme that mashes files down to 50% of their original size and does it faster than the ST can write to disk. The result is backups in half the time on half the disks. Seeing as how DBII was the fastest backup on the market already, that's really saying something.

Safari Fonts: Jay Pierstorff has made hundreds of fonts for PageStream and now for Calamus. He was there from the San Francisco area with about a zillion fonts from his own company as well as from Cherry Fonts and others. A good selection of imported ST magazines was also a welcome addition.

SDS: I'm old enough to remember the mildly subversive college group "Students for a Democratic Society". Wrong SDS. Software Development Systems is a newcomer developer with a printer utility pack for HP Deskjets, Laserjets, and the Atari lasers. It really does a lot, and should be available October 15. Ready now is the Newdesk Icon Editor. This one is a CPX module that enables you to create or modify the icons on the TT and Mega/STe newdesk desktop. It's only \$19.95.

Sliccware: Randy Foster continues to improve his multitasking environment and desktop system, Slicctop. It is impressive to watch him set a long series of file copy and move operations, and then shut off the machine... turn it back on, and after the boot, it picks up where it left off. Yikes. An impressive list of features and power have failed as yet to cause other third party developers to write custom Slicctop-enabled applications, but most existing software can benefit from the environment.

SoftAware: Informer II has steadily grown more complete and professional in features and presentation. The graphic-enabled database was selling well.

Softlogik: Yep, Pagestream 2.1. A low key exhibit, but the power of the improved Pagestream is well known and well received.

Sudden Inc.: Ditch everything you know about word processing and text editors before you sit down with Sudden View. A desk accessory text editor, it's, well, shocking. Think of it more like a paint program that uses letters. Scrolling, cut and paste, formatting, all the normal functions of an editor, but handled with the speed and abandon of a graphics editor. Words fail to accurately describe it. Too many people walked right by the unassuming booth and missed the experience. I'd like to see Sudden View expand into a full fledged word processor with spell checking, etc.

Wizworks: Dr. Bob couldn't make it this far from his East Coast home, but representatives offered the Wizworks catalog of graphics tools and fun. Multiviewergraphica, an image editor par excellence; Mug Shot!, the face maker; Image Cat, to catalog your many image files, and more.

Z*Net: Yes, I was there too. It was great to meet old and new friends and to get first hand feedback about our weekly news service. It was fairly unanimous: keep up the news reporting and leave the bashing to others. They appreciated a focus on things that can help them use their machine rather than on the political hoopla and pressure games. Those

flaming editorials haven't done anything to change the company anyway, but they have unduly discouraged users who were happy until they were told that they were fools. Thanks for sharing that with me, and you can expect more of what you have come to expect from us at Z*Net: News, not Blues.

[Is that all? No. Other developers were scattered in and among the retailers and distributors... there were just too many of them. That's the show promoter's THIRD most favorite complaint.]

USER GROUPS

H.A.C.K.S. was the sponsoring group of the Glendale show, once again. It stands for "Hooked on Atari Computer Keyboards Society"... what some folks won't do to make an acronym work out! The show was masterminded by John King Tarpinian as usual, and his casual and giving attitude was reflected in every facet of the show. His own group declined to have a table at the show so that the members could concentrate on giving the vendors and hall personnel the support they needed. These folks deserve an international round of applause for a job not just well done, but for conduct beyond the call of duty.

Other clubs with tables and displays at the Glendale show:

San Diego ACE: A SoundTools demo of voice digitization plus lots of hardware on display. They also offered their newsletter, the I/O CONNECTOR.

NOCCC: North Orange County Computer Club offered used software and magazines in a swap-meet fashion for their members.

ACES: From the San Gabriel Valley, selling blue Atari hats.

ACAOC: Atri Computer Association of Orange County sold PD disks including MAC disks for GCR users. This group used to have presidents named Bob Brodie and Mike Fulton. Hmmm.

South Bay Ace: Demos and disks for sale from the South Bay of Los Angeles.

RAM: "Real Atari Maniacs" from Ventura County, California, offered "free advice" and solicited memberships.

WRAP-UP: What does this all mean?

The aftermath of a show of this size is usually a slow period for retailers, mostly getting returns for bad disks or software that didn't pan out as the buyer hoped. This year, the Computer Network and other stores in Los Angeles report the opposite. New users, new buyers are coming into the stores and buying at a clip notably above that of the normal season. People came to the show and were invigorated by the crowd, by the new software, by the enthusiasm of the show. MIDI users are finally exploring other uses of their "music computer". Even the developers are encouraged beyond anything imagined only a week earlier. Crowds thronged around booths that might have been lonely. Sales, sales, sales of software and hardware marked what might have been another disappointment in a series, part of the winding-down of Atari. Instead, the Glendale Show Success may be the first glimmer of a new day for our favorite computer.

You may be saying, yeah yeah, right, John. Get some coffee and call me back. OK, I will. Next week, I'll tell you the blow-by-blow inside details of Bill Rehbock's spill-the-whole-story talk at Glendale. [I have it all on videotape, he can't squirm out of any of it!] Taken together with the show itself, it all might change your mind too.

Next week: Rehbock Speaks, '030 Wars

- John Nagy, exclusive for Z*Net News Service, Copyright 1991 by Rovac Industries.

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CODEHEAD SOFTWARE UPDATE

Press Release

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For immediate release

CodeHeadQuarters
Thursday, September 19, 1991

CodeHead Software Announces MultiDesk Deluxe

Thanks For The Memory!

CodeHead Software is now shipping MultiDesk Deluxe, a major upgrade for their very popular desk accessory loader/unloader.

In the past, the main drawbacks to MultiDesk were that it could eat up a lot of memory because all your DAs had to be loaded at once, and that you couldn't load or unload DAs while running a program. This new version of MultiDesk transcends both those limitations in one leap!

MultiDesk was the first program to break through the GEM barrier of six desk accessories. The new version now lets you load and unload DAs "on the fly," at any time, even while running a program. While MultiDesk Deluxe still supports the old-style "resident" DAs, it now also allows "nonresident" DAs (known as MDXs) which are loaded only when you select them and wiped from memory when you close them. All nonresident DAs share the same memory space, giving you access to many more DAs and freeing up more memory for use by applications. This approach (inspired by Atari's new Extensible Control Panel) also lets you boot up faster, since only the names of the DAs need to be read from disk.

A breakthrough technique called "delta vector snapshotting" allows MultiDesk Deluxe to load and unload nonresident DAs even in programs that take over the ST's interrupt vectors, without fear of crashing the system. And MultiDesk Deluxe's new "reserve buffer" lets you open DAs that need to allocate memory even in programs that try to grab all available memory for themselves.

In contrast to Atari's Extensible Control Panel (which requires its "CPX modules" to be specially written and puts severe limits on their functionality), MultiDesk Deluxe works with almost all existing ST desk accessories; no modifications to the DAs or special coding techniques

are required. It is compatible with all models of ST, STe, and TT computers.

MultiDesk Deluxe is available now, and retails for \$49.95. Current owners of MultiDesk can upgrade to the latest version for \$20.00, which includes a brand new rewritten manual, now packaged in a 3-ring binder. For more information, contact:

CodeHead Software
PO Box 74090
Los Angeles, CA 90004
Tel (213) 386-5735
Fax (213) 386-5789

After you get MultiDesk Deluxe, you too will be singing "Thanks For The Memory!"

CODEHEAD SOFTWARE ANNOUNCES AVANT VECTOR PRICE REDUCTION!

Your comments about the price of the EPS version of Avant Vector (known as Avant Plot) have been heard! Avant Vector is the Rolls Royce of vector tracing/editing programs -- and now we're able to bring it you for Toyota prices!

Through extensive discussions with our European contacts, and with new information about taxes and import duties, we've been able to manage a price reduction of \$300 for Avant Plot. This version includes EPS importing/exporting, and professional plotting/cutting features. The new pricing is:

Avant Vector \$495
Avant Plot \$895

And until December 31, 1991, we have special introductory prices:

Avant Vector \$445
Avant Plot \$845

To order your copy of the premiere vector graphics package for Atari computers, contact:

CodeHead Software
PO Box 74090
Los Angeles, CA 90004
Tel (213) 386-5735
Fax (213) 386-5789

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WAACE AtariFest '91:

Announcement

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The WAACE AtariFest is Saturday and Sunday October 12 and 13 in Reston, Virginia, about seven miles East of Washington D.C.'s Dulles Airport. The show is again at the deluxe Sheraton Reston International Conference Center, with outstanding facilities for the show, demonstrations, and seminars. Show hours are from 10AM to 5PM both days, with special

events including a swap meet, a cocktail party, and a banquet on Saturday evening.

Vendors committed to appear at press time included:

Accusoft * D. A. Brumleve * Codehead Software * Phil Comeau Software *
Current Notes Magazine * Debonair Software * eSTeem Inc * FAST
Technology * ICD Inc * ISD Marketing Inc * JMG Software * Joppa Computer
Products * L & Y Electronics * Michtron * Micro Creations * Musicode
Software * Rio Computers * SLICCWARE * Step Ahead Software * ST Informer
/A & D Software * Toad Services * Unicorn Publications/Atari Interface
Magazine * Wizworks

Call the Sheraton Reston Hotel at 703-620-9000 and mention the WAACE
AtariFest for hotel rates of \$59 per night for single or double
occupancy, \$66 for triple and quad. The Sheraton address is 11810
Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, VA 22091.

For additional WAACE information: John D. Barnes, 7710 Chatham Rd, Chevy
Chase, MD 20815, GEMail: J.D.Barnes, CIS: 73047,2565

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GRIBNIF SOFTWARE UPDATE

Press Release

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Gribnif Software is proud to announce its latest release into the North
American Atari software market:

Arabesque Professional

A complete BITMAP and VECTOR illustration software.

Developed in conjunction with Shift Computer Software, this program
offers a new standard in image editing for desktop publishing. It
allows you to create, import, and save graphics in the two standard
formats: BITMAP and VECTOR.

A BITMAP graphic contains the exact information you see, composed of its
individual dots (also known as pixels). Programs like Touch-Up usually
handle this type of graphic.

A VECTOR graphic contains a description of all the shapes in the image.
Because all the objects in a vector image are calculated, you can get a
much higher degree of detail using this method. Programs like Easy Draw
usually handle this type of graphic.

General Features

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- o Easy to use, icon-driven, pop-up menus
- o Edit up to 20 pages in memory
- o Draw points, lines, Bezier polygons (2D or 3D), B-Splines, circles,
ellipses, arcs, and rectangles (with or without rounded corners) in
Bitmap or Vector mode.
- o Choose from various line end-styles, thicknesses, patterns, etc.
- o Use any of 108 different patters, or edit your own, or use any block

- o Special block operations (rectangle or arbitrary shape) include: cut & paste, mirror, rotate, bend, increase contrast, invert, contour, smooth, pattern, enlarge, save/load.
- o Output to 9- and 24-pin dot matrix, and Atari and HP laser printers (includes its own fast printer drivers).
- o All functions operate very rapidly in magnification mode.
- o Support for Calamus Outline CVG files
- o A full UNDO feature
- o Complete illustrated manual
- o Load various image types including IFF, IMG, NeoChrome, Doodle, Degas, and Arabesque's own compressed formats.
- o Configurable "spray can" feature
- o Converts vector graphics to bit images (with gray scaling options)

File Formats

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In BITMAP mode: Arabesque supports Degas, Stad, GEM IMG, IFF and Arabesque's own advanced ABM file format.

In VECTOR mode: Arabesque supports GEM/3, Calamus CVG, and Arabesque's own advanced AOB file format.

System Requirements

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Arabesque Professional works on all Atari ST & TT systems and supports large screen displays. It requires at least 1 megabyte of memory and a monochrome monitor.

Pricing & Release Information

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Arabesque Professional carries a suggested retail of \$199.95. It is scheduled for release in early November, 1991. Call us for additional information.

Gribnif Software

P.O. Box 350
Hadley, MA 01035
Tel: (413) 584-7887
Fax: (413) 584-2565

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Z*NET SOFTWARE SHELF

Special Condensed Version
by Ron Berinstein

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NBM11.LZH Beta version of NBM v1.1 - Use NBM to test the speed of your ST/STe/TT and its accessories. This version adds percent increase to the display, and adds the ability to choose which test(s) you wish to run.

FOOTBAL.ARC Football is a medium resolution game written in Alcyon C using the DRI developer's kit. Jeff Parkhurst is the developer. Quite a bit of fun for football fans. Enjoy!

CATCHME.ARC Catchme works in high res ONLY. It is a game that you use

the mouse to catch cards that say catchme before another appears. Speed increases as you succeed with each board. German but easily understandable. MONO ONLY TT/ST mode - Mega - Not tested on the STE

DAME.ARC Renaissance (DAME) is a German game of checkers. The game is in German but if you know how to play checkers, playing the game is as simple as pointing and dragging your piece to the square you want to move to. You can play against another person, or the computer. You can even autoplay to see strategic moves. This file contains an editor as well.

BLOECKE.ARC This is a 3D Tetris game in German. Don't worry, you can figure out the comands easy enough. You need to use the arrow keys to direct the 3d blocks. Also you can select what rate of speed you want them to go at. It also comes with some line art demo that seems to be a part of the program. COLOR/MONO

LOKOMOTI.ARC This is a train game from Germany. It is for MONO systems only. Use the left mouse button for the switches and the right to stop the train for picking up passengers.

UNCLE3_7.ARC Shows \ Prints \ Saves COMPLETE directories. Searches disks \ library for Normal \ Hidden \ DUPLICATE files, wildcards supported! Other features include Hiding, Stamping, Renaming (w\custom characters) files, Create, Delete, Rename Folders, Text Editor, 2 floppy labelers (send directory to floppy label), Format, Appending, Merging, Copying files, and more! Fonts for ALL options.

DRCTPR.LZH Allows you to print a file simply by saving it to disk useful in text programs that do not have a PRINT feature.

FINDER.ARC Finder will locate a file containing up to three chosen phrases. Type in the phrases, select a folder to search, and Finder will look for a file containing any, or all of the phrases. Search can be case sensitive, or not, and phrases can contain non-ASCII characters. Runs as a PRG or ACC on any ST or TT in any resolution. Short docs included in the ARC.

DJ_1STWD.ARC 1st Word printer driver for H-P DeskJet. Use the 1st Word Install program to convert this .HEX file to a .CFG file. Known to work on DeskJet Plus, it should be OK on other models. Use with PC-8 internal font. Almost all foreign characters are available.

MMM20.LZH is the updated version of Midi Music Maker. This version adds the capability to create SMF format 1 files and has a save and load configuration. It also displays time signature for some of the music that it plays and adds a few other features and corrects some defects. A synthesizer is required and 1 meg of memory is recommended. It works in color or mono.

1ST_NOTE.ARC 1st_note is a german midi program that you can use with your synthesizer or just with your computer speakers. It allows you to place notes on a sheet and play it back. It has text capabilities, drawing capabilities and MUCH MUCH more. It is in German and you CAN use the program without understanding GERMAN Mono only TT/ST mode - STs - Not tested on an STE.

CALLTI.ARC Calltime is shareware by Bob Areddy. This program will call the Naval Observatory in Wash, DC and set your computer's internal clock.

The above files were compiled by Ron Berinstein co-sysop CodeHead
Quarters BBS (213) 461-2095 from files that were either directly
uploaded to CodeHead Quarters BBS, or downloaded from GENie, CompuServe,
and Delphi online services.

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GENIE

To sign up for GENie service, call (with modem) 800-638-8369. Upon  
connection type HHH (RETURN after that). Wait for the U#= prompt. Type  
XJM11877,GENie and hit RETURN.

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COMPUSERVE

To sign up for CompuServe service, call 800-848-8199. Ask for operator
198. You will be sent a \$15.00 free membership kit.

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